



A Study on Awareness and Training for Sexual Harassment Prevention at the Workplace with Reference to Aspino HR Services

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ABSTRACT

Sexual harassment in the workplace presents significant challenges, affecting both individuals and organizational integrity. In Tamil Nadu, effective HR services are crucial for fostering talent and maintaining organizational efficiency. However, current training programs often emphasize compliance over genuine education. This study evaluates the effectiveness of sexual harassment prevention initiatives, highlighting that while 25.0% of respondents are very satisfied with their workplace culture, a substantial 44.2% are merely satisfied, and 22.5% feel neutral. Notably, 40.0% of respondents felt comfortable reporting incidents, indicating that HR and management are perceived as responsive. Despite this, there is a weak negative correlation between satisfaction with incident responses and overall company handling of complaints, suggesting room for improvement in addressing sexual harassment comprehensively.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, Workplace challenges, Organizational integrity, HR services, Talent fostering, Organizational efficiency, training, Prevention initiatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment in the workplace poses significant threats to both employees and organizations, resulting in severe internal consequences for victims such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, it leads to external repercussions, impacting stakeholders emotionally and financially, and tarnishing the organization's reputation. As awareness of sexual harassment and assault grows, particularly through movements like #MeToo, there is an increasing emphasis on developing strategies to prevent and address these issues effectively. Organizations are now implementing robust policies, comprehensive training programs, and fostering cultures of respect and accountability. This article explores the critical need for a deeper understanding and education on sexual harassment, highlighting best practices and the importance of ongoing training to create safer work environments.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. MI-SUK CHO, KYOUNG-BOK AND JIN-YOUNG (2023), made research on the topic "Workplace Violence Experienced by Personal Care Workers in a District in Seoul, Republic of Korea: A Comparison Study with Office and Service Workers," their survey recorded long-term incidents of psychological violence over the past 12 months, indicating that the work environment did not change abruptly. The recent report on increased workplace violence experienced by healthcare workers because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we cannot confirm whether office or service workers matched from the national data were appropriately compared with personal care workers. The surveyed personal care workers were a convenience sample from a district in Seoul, Republic of Korea. They cannot be extrapolated to a broader population, nor can we generalize the research findings. The data are based on self-reporting, which may lack objectivity. Workers' responses to violence may vary, owing to internal and external factors. However, self-reporting is likely to contribute to the relationship in a non-differential way and so may not change the direction of the observed relationship in this study. They considered the negative impact of workplace violence on workers' well-being and health services, policy updates and interventions focusing on personal care workers are needed to reduce workplace violence, safeguard workers' rights, and establish a secure working environment.

2. LINDSEY E. BLUMELL & DINFIN MULUPI (2023) made research on the topic "The Impact of Anti-Sexual Harassment Policies on Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Workplace" stated that the gap between lived experiences and perceptions must be closed through implementing robust anti-sexual harassment policies with clear definitions, multiple reliable reporting channels, due process when complaints are made, organizational communication that includes survivor informed training, and consistent monitoring. Future research should continue to expand to other regions and types of media organizations. Future research should also include more attention to LGBTQIA+ identities and ethnicity to understand intersecting characteristics of participants. Future research could also focus on case studies to explore any nuanced differences between news organizations within a country or region. The limitations of this study include a small sample of gender non-conforming people.

3. ARÍSTIDES VARA- HORNA, ZAIDA ASENCIOS- GONZALEZ, LILIANA QUIPUZCO- CHICATA, ALBERTO DÍAZ-ROSILLO AND DANTE SUPO-ROJAS, (2023) made a study on "Preventing Workplace Sexual Harassment and Productivity Loss during Crisis Periods: The Protective Role of Equitable Management". This study provides empirical evidence of relationships between equitable and fair management and various facets of work behavior during periods of crisis. However, future research could explore how these relationships play out in different contexts and indifferent crises. In addition, other possible mechanisms through which equitable and fair management may influence work behavior could be examined. Future research is encouraged to consider incorporating and analyzing these potential variables.

4. (CHVATÍK ET AL., 2021) Several risk factors increase the chances of suffering WSH, among which are working in contact with the public; with people in distress; with objects of value; in situations that are not (or not correctly) covered or protected by labor law and social protection; during unsocial working hours; alone or in relative isolation; in intimate spaces and private homes; in conflict zones, in leadership positions or highly masculinized sectors, among others.

5. DIPALI GUPTA AND DR. JUHI GARG, (2020) made a study on the topic "Sexual Harassment at Workplace" stating that the problem of sexual harassment relates not so much to the actual biological differences between men and women, but to the gender or social roles which are attributed to men and women in social and economic life, and perceptions about male and

female sexuality in society. Sexual harassment is not an epidemic, it is pandemic an everyday, everywhere occurrence. Work environment inappropriate behavior not just makes an unreliable and threatening workplace for the woman yet additionally discourages their capacity to convey in the present contending world as per the circumstances, it causes serious harm and is also the strongest symptom of sex discrimination in the workplace.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In today's workplaces, addressing sexual harassment is not just a moral imperative but a legal obligation. Organizations must navigate a complex web of laws, regulations, and internal policies to create a safe and inclusive environment for all employees. This involves clearly defining sexual harassment, outlining prohibited behaviours, and establishing robust reporting procedures with consequences for perpetrators. However, prevention goes beyond policies; it requires a cultural shift. Employees need education on the various forms of harassment and the impact it can have on individuals and the organization as a whole. Promoting a respectful workplace culture involves everyone, encouraging bystander intervention, addressing biases, and fostering effective communication and boundaries. Leaders play a crucial role in modeling appropriate behavior and responding effectively to reports of harassment, while training and reinforcement ensure awareness remains high. Continuous evaluation and integration into broader diversity and inclusion initiatives are essential for creating lasting change and upholding a zero-tolerance approach to harassment.

4. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace remains a pressing issue, necessitating effective prevention strategies. Despite the implementation of awareness and training programs, the efficacy of these initiatives in shaping employees' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards sexual harassment prevention requires thorough evaluation. This study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of such programs on employees' understanding, perceptions, and actions related to sexual harassment. By identifying best practices and areas for improvement, this research aims to contribute to the creation of safer and more respectful work environments, fostering positive workplace cultures free from harassment and discrimination.

5. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

- This study has several limitations that may affect the generalizability and accuracy of its findings.
- The sample primarily consists of young (20-30 years old) and female respondents, potentially skewing the results.
- Additionally, the study may suffer from self-selection bias, where individuals with strong opinions or experiences with sexual harassment are more likely to participate.
- The significant proportion of respondents in the "Others" category for job positions and those with limited work experience (0-1 year) also limits the specificity and applicability of the findings.
- Despite high levels of awareness and training, underreporting of incidents remains a concern, indicating that the actual prevalence of sexual harassment may be higher than reported. Furthermore, the effectiveness of training programs appears variable, and the study's cross-sectional nature does not capture long-term trends or impacts.
- Addressing these limitations in future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of sexual harassment in the workplace and improve prevention and response strategies.

6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine whether the training sessions are conducted for all employees and to check the effectiveness of the session.

- To compare data on reported incidents of sexual harassment, employee perceptions of the company's response to harassment, and overall awareness levels about the preventive measures.
- To analyze the effectiveness of training on SH.
- To suggest or recommend strategies for conducting awareness training programs

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is descriptive in nature. The study consists of primary. Primary data is collected from a structured questionnaire from the respondents. The research approach selected by the researcher is mixed and consists of both quantitative and qualitative data. The research instrument used by the researcher is the **structured and pre-tested questionnaire** for survey research. Based on the list of 120 employees, researchers contacted them for data collection, **Census Method** was adopted. It is based on the complete responses given by the respondents. **T Test** and **Correlation Analysis** are used in this study.

8. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

8.1 T TEST

EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING * TRAINING RECEIVED ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION

H₀: The difference between effectiveness of training and training received on sexual harassment prevention is not significant

Table 8.1

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			Sig.
	F	t	Df	
Effectiveness of training	1.897	-2.141	118	.034

(Source: Computed Data)

Interpretation:

Based on the statistical analysis, the p-value of 0.034 indicates a significant difference in the effectiveness of training on sexual harassment prevention. With a t statistic of -2.141 and 118 degrees of freedom, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This underscores the importance of tailored training programs in addressing and mitigating instances of sexual harassment, promoting a safer and more respectful workplace environment for all employees.

8.2 CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 8.2

HANDLING COMPLAINTS RELATED TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPARED TO OTHER WORKPLACE * OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY

		Handling complaints related to Sexual Harassment compared to other workplace	Overall satisfaction with the Sexual Harassment training provided by the company
Handling complaints related to Sexual Harassment compared to other workplace	Pearson Correlation	1	.567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	120	120
Overall satisfaction with the Sexual Harassment training provided by the company	Pearson Correlation	.567**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	120	120

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation:

The correlation analysis reveals a significant relationship between how sexual harassment complaints are managed compared to other workplaces and the overall satisfaction with the company's training on sexual harassment prevention. With a correlation coefficient of 0.567 and a p-value of

- the company's response procedures for reported incidents of sexual harassment to ensure victims receive adequate support and perpetrators face appropriate disciplinary measures, demonstrating a zero-tolerance approach to harassment.
- Recent survey results indicate that while most employees have received and find sexual harassment prevention (SHP) training effective, there remains a notable minority who are either unaware of or have not undergone such training.

To ensure comprehensive awareness and preparedness, the organization should enhance the frequency and depth of SHP training. $F_{(1, 100)} < 0.001$, indicating statistical significance at the 0.01 level, there's a clear positive correlation. In essence, employees who perceive more effective handling of sexual harassment complaints compared to other workplaces tend to express greater satisfaction with the company's training program. This underscores the importance of robust complaint management systems in enhancing the efficacy of sexual harassment training initiatives and overall workplace satisfaction.

9. FINDINGS

The findings of the survey reveal several key insights regarding sexual harassment awareness, training, and workplace culture. A majority of respondents fall within the age range of 20-30, with a significant portion being female. Most respondents have completed undergraduate education and possess less than one year of work experience. Despite a high awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace and a considerable percentage having received training on prevention, only about half rate the effectiveness of this training positively. However, a substantial majority feel comfortable reporting incidents, indicating trust in HR or management. Regular quarterly training sessions suggest organizational commitment to prevention efforts. The low percentage reporting witnessing or experiencing harassment may indicate a positive workplace environment, reinforced by the perception that the company takes harassment seriously and has clear policies in place. While there are areas for improvement, such as increasing satisfaction with training effectiveness, overall, the findings suggest a relatively positive workplace culture regarding sexual harassment.

10. SUGGESTIONS

- Consider offering training sessions more frequently and in diverse formats, such as online modules or in-person workshops, to ensure all employees receive comprehensive sexual harassment prevention training that accommodates different learning preferences and schedules.
- Enhance reporting mechanisms by promoting anonymity, providing support resources, and implementing clear procedures to address reported incidents promptly and confidentially, fostering greater participation and confidence in the reporting process.
- Review and refine hermore, despite a majority feeling comfortable reporting incidents and acknowledging the company's serious approach, a significant number of employees still refrain from reporting observed or experienced harassment. This underscores the need to bolster reporting mechanisms, guarantee confidentiality, and provide robust victim support.
- Although satisfaction with the company's response to reported incidents is high, continuous improvement in handling such cases is crucial. Transparent communication and an open dialogue about SHP initiatives are vital to maintaining trust. Regular monitoring and feedback are essential to refine these efforts and sustain a safe, inclusive workplace.

11. CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, while the majority of employees find the company's sexual harassment prevention (SHP) training effective, there is a need to ensure that all employees are adequately trained through more frequent and varied formats, such as online modules and in-person workshops.
- Enhancing reporting mechanisms by promoting anonymity and clear procedures will foster greater confidence in the reporting process. Additionally, refining response procedures to provide adequate support to victims and appropriate disciplinary measures for perpetrators is essential. Continuous improvement, transparent communication, and regular feedback will help maintain trust and ensure a safe, inclusive workplace.

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